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Whatever difficulty one finds in taking the view of mind I have indicated (and to the average person the difficulty at the first blush may seem insuperable), he will do well in his suspense, if conscious of suspense, to anchor his judgment in the broad truth that the phenomena of mind, without exception, are subject to the law of causation, the negation of which is unthinkable; and, here, patiently ride at anchor, till at some new stage of experience, or some new reach of training, the fog shall lift from the sea, and the sun light up the shore. Be the night short or long, the land is there, and the morning will reveal it.

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SPENCER'S DEFINITION OF EVOLUTION.

It is a hazardous venture to call in question so basic a formula elaborated by such a master of the subject as the definition of evolution and dissolution laid down by Herbert Spencer. Yet as philosophy and science acknowledge no pontiff, the privilege of raising a question is at least open, and it may even be that finality is not yet reached.

Spencer's celebrated definition of evolution, although well known, may be repeated here:

"Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."

His conception of dissolution is the converse of this,—"the absorption of motion and disintegration of matter."

To establish and illustrate his definition of evolution, Spencer utilises such cases as the evolution of a solar system from a nebula, of a living organism from its ovum, of complex civilisations from crude social states, and numerous others.

In these instances the definition applies perfectly. The evolution of a solar system from a nebula, for instance, is a typical integration of matter, with a passage from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity. But how about the evolution of the nebula? Can the same formulæ that fit the evolution and dissolution of a solar system apply to a nebula? Apparently not; on the contrary, the two formulæ would appear to be exactly reversed.

No final theory as to the origin of nebulæ has yet been formed; but if the common notion, which too has been countenanced by Spencer, that they arise from the collision of stars approximates the reality, then the evolution of a nebula consists in a dissipation of matter and an absorption of motion,—the reverse of the definition.

On the other hand, the dissolution of a nebula is brought about by the very process by which a solar system is formed from it. The transformation of the nebula into the solar system constitutes the evolution of the solar system, but it is also the dissolution of the nebula. The process is one and the same; but it has a double aspect. From the standpoint of the nebula it is dissolution, from that of the solar system it is evolution. Here, then, is a clear case in which a process of dissolution, that of a nebula, consists in an integration of matter and a passage to a definite coherent heterogeneity,—precisely the reverse of Spencer's definition.

A single exception to the truth of the definition is sufficient to overthrow its universal validity. Similar considerations when applied to other instances of evolution, will, however, yield results similar to those in the case of the nebula. The evolution of an organism from an egg is one process of dissolution of the egg. The transformation of a series of organic forms from one species to another is the evolution of the subsequent species but the dissolution of the precedent species. In the passage of a people from a simple social state to a complex civilisation, the evolution of the civilisation follows the lines of Spencer's definition; but the same process brings about the dissolution of the simple society. Thus, the transition from feudalism to modern democracy was the evolution of the latter but the dissolution of the former.

In general, evolution and dissolution are the same process, viewed from different sides. The universe is made up of physical and psychic elements undergoing continual change and rearrangement. The transformation of one order or arrangement of things to another order or arrangement is both evolution and dissolution; it is the dissolution of the preceding order, but the evolution of the succeeding order. There is but one process of change from any one order to the next succeeding order of things; sometimes the transition is an integration of matter, sometimes it is a dissipation of matter. Evolution therefore is sometimes an integration, sometimes a dissipation; and dissolution is the reverse aspect of the same process.

As the cases of evolution and dissolution are exactly equal in number, Spencer's formulæ of evolution and dissolution according to this conception would each seem to hold good for just one half of the cases of cosmic transformations. The two definitions are complementary, reversible, and interchangeable, and to complete their applicability they would have to be conjoined.

This analysis would seem to reduce the process of evolution to a simple continuous mechanical flux and rearrangement of the material and psychic elements of the universe that is always and everywhere going on, and to take from the conception of evolution the idea of progression that is generally accepted as being implied in that of evolution. This implication of progress is, however, somewhat illusory. In the first place, there is no absolute or universal standard by which progress or regress can be judged. For purposes of convenience or in our intellectual vanity or shortsightedness we may establish ideals or standards; these standards may be useful for a time, but with changing conditions they become altered or obsolete. Again, the idea of progress is apt to assume a teleological tone, and thus to become a discordant element in a philosophy and science based on immediate causes alone.

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THE RISEN CHRIST AT DAMASCUS.

In any consideration of Jesus's resurrection appearances, whether to the disciples or to Paul, it is well to make a distinction between the vision hypothesis and the apparition hypothesis advanced in explanation of that remarkable series of events. The term *vision* is commonly used of what is seen in a dream, ecstasy, trance, or the like, and especially of experiences of a purely subjective nature. The term *apparition* is more suitable in those cases which seem to be accompanied by none of the abnormal psychical conditions, and in which the impression of the objective reality of the appearance is more strongly and vividly felt by the percipient.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the supposition that Jesus's death on the cross was only apparent and that he was afterwards so revived that he was able to appear again among his friends: for although this grotesque hypothesis has been often accepted as explaining the appearances to the disciples, it could certainly not account for the appearance to Paul at Damascus. So also the rationalistic explanations of Renan and others, of a storm on Mt. Lebanon, a flash of lightning, or a sudden attack of ophthalmic fever, need not concern us here. The view that Paul was stricken with sudden blindness in which he recognised the arresting grace of God[1] is ingenious, but is unsatisfactory in important particulars, and also finds little support in the evidence given by Acts, chap. xxvi, the passage containing the earliest account of the event outside of Paul's own writings. And again, Baur's method of proving from the Acts accounts, without regard to Paul's testimony, that the appearance was simply visionary and was later transformed into a myth, is now generally rejected.

The vision hypothesis in varying form has been advocated by such scholars as Holsten, Hausrath, Pfleiderer, Weizsäcker, and Holtzmann. Their conclusions always rest upon a large basis of truth, but are generally to be regarded with suspicion in proportion as they affirm the simply naturalistic character of the event. The hypothesis of Holsten combines the usual features of the vision hypothesis with certain other ingenious elements, and rests upon three fundamental propositions: (1) That Paul made no distinction between vision and supernatural reality; (2) that the later visions of Paul were essentially similar to the appearance at Damascus; (3) that the previous Christophanies to the disciples were visions and regarded as such by them and by Paul. Stated more fully, Holsten's theory affirms

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[1] Matheson, *Spiritual Development of St. Paul* (1890).